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ABSTRACT

This document is composed of a number of publications of Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) that relate to high quality school-to-work opportunities for young women. Contents include the following: myths and facts about nontraditional work; a list of nontraditional occupations (NTOs) for women; and women and nontraditional work factsheet with statistics, public policy (federal legislation and employment discrimination law), barriers inhibiting entry of women into nontraditional training and employment, and strategies to overcome barriers. Two articles, "Job Strategies: Why Not a Woman? Why Not You?" and "Nontraditional Jobs for Women", are included. Other contents are as follows: key elements for successfully training young women for NTOs, elements for successfully recruiting young women for nontraditional training programs, Milwaukee NET (Nontraditional Employment Training) recruitment brochure and flyer, information on working with role models in NTOs, suggestions for preparing NTO role model panels, and suggestions for NTO role model panels. Two articles focus on how assessment tools affect the career guidance of women and girls and presenting nontraditional career options to young women during the assessment process. A list of national and state nontraditional employment, training, and education resources is followed by one listing national tradeswomen resources. The document ends with information on the NET Project and on Wider Opportunities for Women. (YLB)

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ENSURING QUALITY SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

American Vocational Association Convention

Dallas, Texas

December 12, 1994

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MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT NONTRADITIONAL WORK

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Myth 1. Women are in the labor force to earn some extra spending money.

FACT The majority of women work because of economic need. In March 1988, 58.5 percent of women in the labor force were either single (25 percent), divorced (12 percent), widowed (4 percent), separated (4 percent), or had husbands whose annual 1987 earnings were less than $15,000 (13.5 percent).

Myth 2. Women and men are represented equally in most occupations.

FACT Women workers are concentrated in traditionally female occupations. In 1989, women represented 80 percent of all administrative support (including clerical) workers, and 68 percent of all retail and personal services workers, but only 9 percent of all precision production, craft, and repair workers and 7.2 percent of all apprentices.

Myth 3. Jobs in which women are traditionally employed pay salaries comparable to jobs in which men are traditionally employed.

FACT Jobs in which men are traditionally employed typically pay 30 percent more than traditionally female jobs.

Myth 4. Certain jobs are "men's work" and other jobs are "women's work."

FACT Attitudes about which jobs are appropriate for men and which ones are appropriate for women are the result of tradition and socialization. The vast majority of job requirements are unrelated to sex.

Myth 5. Blue-collar work or heavy, physical labor is nontraditional for women.

FACT Many jobs now thought to be nontraditional for women have been performed by women in the past. Throughout history, women have done heavy labor on the farm and in the fields alongside men, and during World War II, over 6 million women entered the labor force to build ships, airplanes and factory goods.

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Myth 6. Women are not strong enough to do heavy labor.

FACT The strength requirements for nontraditional jobs are often exaggerated. Many nontraditional jobs are less physically demanding than housework, and many traditional women's jobs, such as nursing and waitressing, are just as physically demanding as some nontraditional jobs. Moreover, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that special equipment be provided for very heavy jobs regardless of whether they are being done by a man or a woman. In addition, mechanization continues to decrease the level of physical demand of many jobs. Finally, while the average man is stronger than the average woman, some women are stronger than some men. Women have excellent lower-body strength and with training can develop strong upper-body muscles as well.

Myth 7. Nontraditional jobs are too dirty, noisy, and dangerous for women.

FACT Nontraditional jobs are often dirty and sometimes dangerous. However, both men and women must weigh the hazards with the benefits of taking certain jobs. In addition, many traditionally female jobs, like mothering and nursing, are dirty and messy, and some also have health hazards, such as computer terminal radiation and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Myth 8. A woman's place is in the home, not on a construction site.

FACT In 1990, women accounted for 45 percent of the civilian workforce. Two out of every three workers entering the labor force between 1990 and 2005 will be women. The majority of women work because of economic necessity, and nontraditional jobs better enable women to support themselves and their families.

Myth 9. Women won't like trade work.

FACT Many women enjoy working with their hands and outdoors. They take great pride in in knowing they have helped to build or create something. As a result, researchers have found that most tradeswomen have a high degree of job satisfaction.

Myth 10. Women will leave a job to get married and have children; therefore, the job should go to a man who will stay.

FACT On average, women will work 30 years over the course of their lifetimes, regardless of whether or not they are married. Of those women who do leave to have children, the majority return to work as soon as the children are old enough to be left in childcare.

Myth 11. Women workers are more expensive to employ because they miss too much work due to children's illness and pregnancy.

FACT Studies have shown very little difference in the absentee rates of men and women workers. In fact, women over 45 are out sick substantially less often than men their age.

Myth 12. Married women who have husbands to support them should stay home and leave the good paying jobs for men.

FACT Many American families are unable to support themselves on a single income. As a result, the proportion of married-couple families with the wife in the paid labor force rose from approximately 40 percent in 1972 to 56 percent in 1988. In that same year, the median income of married-couple families with the wife working outside the home was $42,709 compared to $27,220 for those without the wife in the paid labor force. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, even if all the employed married women gave their jobs to unemployed men, there would still be 1.2 million unfilled jobs.

Myth 13. Women on a job site make it difficult for men to concentrate; they are too distracting.

FACT While sexual harassment can be particularly harsh for women working in nontraditional occupations, it can happen in any work environment. The problem that must be stopped, however, is the harassing behavior, not women's entrance into the workplace.

Myth 14. Women will lose their femininity if they work in a trade.

FACT Women can encounter offensive language anywhere, not just on the job site. While women need to be physically prepared for nontraditional jobs, there is nothing unfeminine about being physically fit.

Myth 15. Women do not have the mechanical or mathematical aptitude for skilled trade work.

FACT There is no difference in women's and men's innate skills and potential to justify existing occupational segregation. A study conducted by the Johnson O'Conner Research Foundation Human Engineering Laboratory found no difference attributable to sex in 14 of 22 aptitude tests given to men and women. In the eight remaining tests, women excelled in six tests and men scored higher in two.

Adapted from the Orientation to Nontraditional Occupations for Women (ONOW) Curriculum of the Ohio Department of Education; the Women in Highway Construction manual of the U.S. Departments of Transportation and Labor; and *20 Facts on Women Workers* (1990), US DOL Women's Bureau.

30TH ANNIVERSARY WOW

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WHICH OCCUPATIONS ARE NONTRADITIONAL FOR WOMEN?

The U.S. Department of Labor defines nontraditional occupations (NTOs) as jobs in which women make up less than 25 percent of the total number of workers in that occupation. Women are concentrated in only 22 of the 440 occupational categories classified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The following list is just a sampling of nontraditional occupations for women.

SKILLED TRADES/ APPRENTICESHIPS

Boiler Maker
Bricklayer
Building Inspector
Bulldozer Operator
Carpenter
Carpet Layer
Cement Mason
Drywall Finisher
Electrician
Elevator Constructor
Glazier
House Painter
Insulation Worker
Ironworker
Lathe Operator
Locksmith
Meat Cutter
Metal Fabricator
Millwright
Painter
Paperhanger
Pipefitter
Plasterer
Plumber
Printer
Roofer
Sheetmetal Worker
Stonemason
Tile Layer
Weatherproofer
Welder

TECHNICAL JOBS

Air-Conditioning Mechanic
Air Traffic Controller
Airline Mechanic
Airline Pilot
Appliance Repairer
Audio Engineer (TV and Radio)
Automobile Mechanic
Business Machine Repairer
Computer Repairer
Diesel Mechanic
Drafter
Electric Sign Repairer
EKG and EEG Technician
Electronic Technician
Film Set Designer
Film Soundperson
Forestry Technician
Gem Setter
Grip
Ground Radio Operator
Motion Picture Projectionist
Motorcycle Mechanic
Operating Room Technician
Press Photographer
Radio Repair Technician
Rigger
Telephone Installer
Television Lighting Director
Television Repairer
Television Set Designer
Watch Repairer

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SERVICE JOBS

Bellhop
Exterminator
Furniture Mover
Gardener
Milkperson
Parking Attendant
Organ Tuner/Repairer
Service Station Attendant
Tailor
Taxi Driver
Theater Manager
Tow Truck Operator
Train Conductor
Truck Driver

PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS

Ambulance Driver
Detective
Firefighter
Guard
Police Officer

PROFESSIONS

Agricultural Engineer
Aerospace Engineer
Announcer
Archeologist
Architect
Astronomer
Banking Officer
Biologist
Chemist
Chiropractor

PROFESSIONS, cont.

City Manager
Congressional Representative
Commission Salesperson
Dentist
Diplomat
Engineer
Environmental Specialist
Film Director
Food Scientist
Foreign Service Officer
Funeral Director
Geographer
Geologist
Health Service Administrator
Hospital Administrator
Industrial Chemist
Judge
Lawyer
Marketing Researcher
Mathematician
Meteorologist
Oceanographer
Physician
Physicist
Podiatrist
Political Scientist
President of the United States
Ranger Manager
Rehabilitation Counselor
Religious Leader
Sportswriter
Supreme Court Justice
Supermarket Manager
Surveyor
Television Director
Weatherperson

If you would like more information about NTOs or WOW's Nontraditional Employment Training (NET) Project, contact Kristin Watkins at (202) 638-3143.

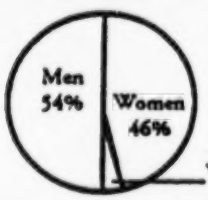
Women and Nontraditional Work

U.S. Department of Labor defines nontraditional occupations as jobs in which women make up less than 25% of the total number of workers in that occupation.

In 1992, 53.8 million women were employed; 3.5 million women (6.6% of all working women) were employed in nontraditional occupations.

Occupational Categories	# of women in nontraditional jobs	Examples
Managerial, Professional	638,000	lawyer, engineer
Technical, Sales, Administrative Support	539,000	pilot, electronic technician
Service	295,000	police, barber
Production, Craft, Repair	622,000	auto mechanic, carpenter
Operators, Fabricators, Laborers	1,003,000	welder, truck and taxi driver
Farming, Forestry, Fishing	444,000	farmer, fisher, groundskeeper
	3,541,000	

Between 1988 and 1992, the number of women in nontraditional jobs remained relatively unchanged at 3% of the total number of employed workers.



Total Men and Women Employed

Women in nontraditional jobs = 3% of employed women and men

Differences in race/ethnicity, age and marital status are minimal between women working in traditional jobs and women in nontraditional jobs.

Characteristics	% of All Women Working in: Traditional	Nontraditional
White	84%	86%
Black or Hispanic	16%	14%
Under 35	44%	43%
35 or over	56%	57%
Single	37%	41%
Married	63%	59%

Women working in nontraditional jobs typically earn 20%–30% more than women in traditional occupations.

Traditionally Female Jobs	Women's Median Weekly Pay		Traditionally Male Jobs
Secretary	$373	$523	Mechanic/Repairer
Child Care Worker	$153	$318	Motor Vehicle Operator
Textile Sewing Machine Operator	$216	$445	Police Officer
Data Entry Clerk	$344	$587	Mail Carrier

When women work in the same occupations as men they still do not earn equal pay.

Occupation	Wages: Women	Men	Wage Gap
Truck Driver	$299	$421	29%
Freight, Stock and Material Handler	$278	$314	12%
Police/Detective	$445	$552	19%
Printing Machine Operator	$308	$464	33%

Over the past 5 years, the greatest increase of women working in nontraditional jobs has been in the professional occupations.

Occupation	Percent Female: 1988	1992
Lawyer	19.3%	21.4%
Engineer	7.3%	8.5%
Surveyor/Mapmaker	4.3%	6.7%
Physicist/Astronomer	7.1%	11.1%

Even though most working women (73%) are in nonprofessional occupations, gains in those nontraditional jobs have been minimal or nonexistent over the past 5 years.

Occupation	Percent Female: 1988	1992
Electrician	1.4%	1.2%
Telephone Installer	12.1%	10.5%
Truck Driver	4.3%	4.6%
Automobile Mechanic	.7%	.8%

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Women and Nontraditional Work

Public Policy

JOB TRAINING PARTNERSHIP ACT (JTPA)

- Provides federal resources for employment and training.
- Authorizes funding for basic skills and job training in nontraditional areas.
- Aims to reduce welfare dependency and increase employment earnings.
- Targets services to special populations including women, minorities, handicapped persons and welfare recipients.

HOWEVER:

- JTPA Title IIA serves only 3 to 10% of its eligible population.
- In over half the SDAs studied by the GAO in 1991, an average of 9% of women and 29% of men receiving classroom training were trained for occupations paying $7.00/hour or more.
- In 1989, a GAO report indicated that only 9% of female JTPA participants were trained for nontraditional jobs.

CARL PERKINS ACT

- Provides federal resources for vocational education.
- Focuses on sex equity in vocational education and encourages nontraditional enrollments.
- Targets single parents and homemakers through sex equity programs.

THE NONTRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN (NEW) ACT (P.L. 102-235)

- Amends JTPA to require states and SDAs to set goals for increasing the number of women trained and placed in nontraditional jobs, and to evaluate their progress in meeting those goals.
- Authorizes $6 million in demonstration grant monies.

THE WOMEN IN APPRENTICESHIP OCCUPATIONS AND NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS ACT (P.L. 102-530)

- Authorizes $1 million to the U.S. Department of Labor to provide technical assistance to employers and unions on preparing the workplace to successfully integrate women into nontraditional jobs.

THE NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1992 (P.L. 102-550)

- Includes *Women in Homebuilding Provision* that enables local housing authorities to train women for homebuilding jobs through construction or rehabilitation of housing in their communities.

THE INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT OF 1991 (ISTEA) (P.L. 102-240)

- Allows states to spend 1/4 of 1% of their surface transportation and bridge monies on training and supportive services for women and minorities.
- This option will increase to 1/2 of 1% on October 1, 1993.

Employment Discrimination Law

TITLE VII OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

- Prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion or national origin.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION GUIDELINES OF 1980

- Interprets Title VII as prohibiting sexual harassment and defines sexual harassment.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACT AMENDMENT OF 1972

- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex by educational institutions receiving federal funds.

EQUAL PAY ACT OF 1973

- Requires an employer to pay equal wages to men and women working in the same establishment at jobs requiring the same skill, responsibility and work conditions.
- Exempts pay differences based on seniority, merit system, production or a factor other than sex.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11246

- Prohibits discrimination by federal contractors and requires affirmative action for women and minorities.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991

- Allows women, people with disabilities, and religious minorities to collect monetary damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination with a limit of $50,000 for those victims who work for an employer of 15 to 100 employees.

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Women and Nontraditional Work

Barriers

Barriers inhibiting entry of women into nontraditional training and employment are complex and interrelated.

SOCIAL/CULTURAL

- Socialization to traditional female roles
- Unsupportive family and friends
- Negative attitudes of classmates and co-workers
- Lack of self-confidence and assertiveness
- Lack of female role models
- Limited experience with tools and mechanical operations

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Limited information provided about nontraditional options
- Females directed toward traditional classes
- Lack of support for sex equity efforts by instructors and other personnel
- Lack of prerequisite classes such as math and science
- Limited access to on-the-job training and apprenticeships
- Lack of support services-child care, transportation, etc.
- Isolation and sexual harassment in classrooms

ON-THE-JOB

- Discrimination in hiring, firing, promotion or lay-offs on basis of sex, race, age, physical build/ability
- Isolation and sexual harassment on the worksite
- Lack of support from some unions
- Lack of support services

CITES FOR THIS FACT SHEET ARE FROM:

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics
U.S. General Accounting Office

Researched by Lori Dudek and Kristin Watkins
Nontraditional Employment Training Project, May 1993

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Women in nontraditional jobs or training are at greater risk of sexual harassment.

- Unwelcome behaviors can include teasing, jokes, remarks and questions; deliberate touching; letters, telephone calls or material of a sexual nature; pressure for sexual favors; sexual assault.

Sexual harassment is against the law.

- Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act has been interpreted through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines of 1980 as prohibiting sexual harassment.

Employers can be held liable for sexual harassment.

- 1986 Supreme Court case established right to seek legal remedy under Title VII (Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson).
- 1991 Supreme Court ruling stated that the display of sexually explicit materials in the workplace can constitute sexual harassment (Robinson v. Jacksonville Shipyards).

Women can take specific steps when faced with sexual harassment.

- Tell the harasser to stop the offensive behavior.
- Document all incidents of harassment.
- Notify your supervisor, union representative or other appropriate person of harassment.
- Know your company or school policy on sexual harassment and follow its procedures.
- Consider filing a formal grievance or complaint if the above steps do not remedy the situation.
- Stay on the job.
- Find support from family, friends or other groups to help you through the situation.

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Women and Nontraditional Work

Strategies

Strategies to overcome barriers must focus on changing institutions and providing individual support to women.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

- Assure effective implementation of the NEW Act and training for women under ISTEA and the National Affordable Housing Reauthorization Act.
- Monitor local and state expenditures for job training and vocational education to see that adequate support exists for training women and girls in nontraditional careers.
- Train teachers, counselors, and program administrators to support access of women and girls to high-wage training and employment.
- Build the program elements necessary to increase the number of women recruited, trained and placed in nontraditional jobs into all public training programs.
- Provide incentives for training programs that meet or exceed their goals for training and placing women and girls in nontraditional jobs.
- Promote collaboration among JTPA, vocational education, apprenticeship and training, unions, sex equity, and JOBS programs, and between employers and enforcement personnel.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- Provide career exploration activities that include career information, role models, and a discussion of the difficulties of being a woman in a nontraditional job.
- Include pre-vocational training, such as tool indentification and physical conditioning, in program curriculum.
- Train women and girls in the "survival skills" necessary to work in male-dominated jobs, including how to handle sexual harrassment.
- Organize support groups for women and girls in nontraditional jobs or training.
- Work with employers and unions to prepare the workplace to successfully receive women and girls in nontraditional jobs.

RESOURCES

Resources from Wider Opportunities for Women

- ***Women's Work Force Network*** – $55 annual membership
- ***Training, Placing and Retaining Women in Nontraditional Jobs Manual*** – $70
- ***Sexual Harassment Solutions at Work*** – $20
- ***Nontraditional Occupations for Women Bibliography*** – $10
- ***Sexual Harassment Bibliography*** – $10
- For a complete listing of publications, videos, and technical assistance services available through WOW call (202) 638-3143.

Other Resources

- ***Sex Equity Coordinators:*** Contact your state Department of Education or Public Instruction
- ***The Women's Bureau,*** U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S3002, Washington, DC 20210; (202) 219-6611
- ***National Tradeswomen's Network,*** 3001 Dickinson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146; (215) 551-3319
- ***Coalition of Labor Union Women,*** 15 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003; (212) 242-0700

About WOW: Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) has worked locally and nationally for 30 years to achieve economic independence and equality of opportunity for women and girls. WOW leads a national network of more than 500 independent women's employment programs and advocates across the country. WOW encourages broad distribution of this fact sheet. Those interested in reproducing it are simply required to inform our office.

Research for this fact sheet was funded by the Ford Foundation.

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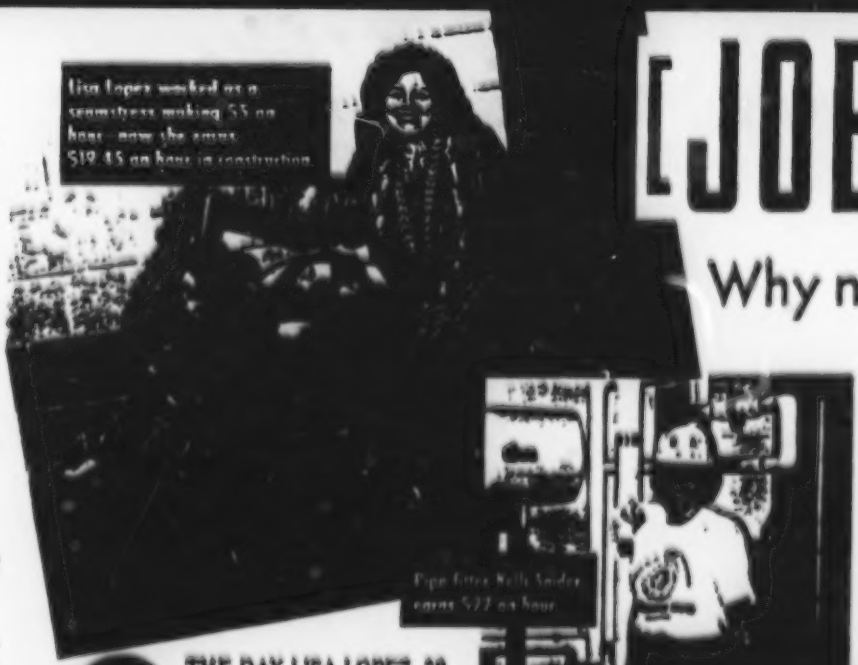
[JOB strategies]

Why not a woman? Why not you?



THE DAY LISA LOPEZ, 32, discovered that her petite girlfriend was making $17 an hour as a construction laborer, her life changed. Lopez, who was employed as a $5-an-hour seamstress, thought, "If she can do it, I sure can." Now she's in construction too, making $19.45 an hour.

Peggy Evans, 37, was tired of typing letters but knew she'd never move out of her secretarial position at the U.S. Postal Service without a bachelor's degree. Then she read an article about women in the skilled trades. "After learning that electricians make more than $20 an hour, I decided that was the job for me," says Evans, who now earns $23.65 an hour.

More women than ever are entering the labor force, but out of 440 total job categories, they are concentrated in just twenty occupations—all so-called women's work. "With that many women pursuing a limited number of jobs, it's no wonder pay scales stay at rock bottom," says Donna Milgram, director of the Nontraditional Employment Training Project at Wider Opportunities for Women in Washington, D.C. Work traditionally performed by men, on the other hand, pays 20 to 30 percent more on average (see chart) and offers excellent benefits and greater job security. "I know what my wages are and how much better my lifestyle is since I went into the trades. You have to ask yourself, Why would you ever do anything else?" says Kelli Snider, 38, a construction supervisor and skilled pipe fitter in Fort Collins, Colorado. Snider makes $22 an hour.

Many women are deterred by the stereotypes of skilled labor. True, the work often can be dirty and physically taxing, but John P. Stilp, dean of the Milwaukee Area Technical College, likes to emphasize the wide variety of technical and industrial jobs that are not physically demanding—in aviation, electricity, mechanical design, medical technology, architectural technology, civil engineering and computerized machinery. Biomedical technicians, for example, who ensure that hospital equipment is functioning properly, do no heavy lifting. "If you can master math and science, these high-wage, high-skilled technical jobs are waiting for you," Stilp says.

"If you can pick up a toddler, carry groceries and learn to recognize tools, you'll be able to handle most of the work on a job site," says Patricia Freeman, the job coordinator of the Training Support Center at Blue Ridge Community College in Flat Rock, North Carolina. As pipe fitter Snider says, "We do need to haul, cut and install pipe—as well as read blueprints and compute basic algebra equations—but new lightweight tools and materials, along with technology, have made the trades less backbreaking than they were."

Like any skilled profession, most trades require intensive training. Many employers, often in tandem with unions, frequently offer paid apprenticeships (there are currently 41,000 nationwide) to bring workers up to speed. In the past few years, legislation has been passed to help attract, train and retain women in nontraditional jobs. Most recently, Congress passed the Women in Apprenticeship Occupations and Nontraditional Occupations Act, designed to help unions and employers integrate women into these jobs.

Dozens of support groups and advocacy organizations—from the Cincinnati-based PREP (Preparation, Recruitment, Employment Programs Inc.) to Hard Hatted Women in Cleveland to Chicago Women in Trades—have cropped up across the country to help women adjust to their new work lives. EnTRADE, based in Berkeley, California, for example, offers women preapprenticeship training. The sixteen-week course includes physical conditioning, mathematics, basic plumbing, carpentry and electrical work, as well as sexism survival skills.

Of the sexism and sexual harassment that are still rife at work sites, electrician Evans says, "Even when you work in offices, you can be harassed." She has developed new confidence as a skilled tradeswoman—and confronts sexism head-on. "I go to the journeyman, then to the foreman, the superintendent, the owner, the union ... I go all the way to the courts if I have *(Continued)*

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[JOB strategies]

(Continued) to," says Evans, who has two such cases currently pending in court.

Once they're in, they're hooked, say women who've joined the blue-collar club. As Evans says: "I love my job. I didn't get any sense of accomplishment after I had typed a letter, but I get such a thrill when I show my daughters the lighting I installed in a building in the shopping mall."

—Laurel Touby

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SKILLED TRADES

At your public library you can find out about the various occupations that exist and their skill requirements. Check the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* and *Occupational Projections and Training Data*.

Your next step should be your state office of the Job Training Partnership Act, a regional office of the Women's Bureau in the U.S. Department of Labor, or a branch of the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. (The national office can steer you to the branch nearest you: call 202-219-5921.) These government offices can guide you to local unions, employers, schools and other groups that offer training and paid apprenticeships. Also check the *Directory of Nontraditional Training and Employment Programs Serving Women*, which the Women's Bureau publishes.

Donna Ellgren, of Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), suggests that before you apply for an apprenticeship program in a particular trade, ask a local union apprenticeship director if she can help you arrange some "job shadowing" (following a skilled worker as she performs her job). For WOW's "Nontraditional Occupations for Women Bibliography" ($10), call (202) 638-3143. —L.T.

GREAT GADGETS: Tiny copy machine

What's as small as an egg carton and faster than a trip to the corner store? QuadMark's new PassPort, the world's first portable photocopy machine. If you're on the road, PassPort runs on a set of rechargeable batteries that can make up to twenty copies per charge. What's the catch? PassPort isn't designed for heavy-duty use: It's slow, requiring about 40 seconds per copied page. But, hey, it sure beats going on safari every time you need a copy for your files. PassPort lists for $349.95.

—Christine Begole

Do short women have a secret advantage?

UNLESS YOU'RE A JOCKEY, BEING PETITE CAN BE A PROFESSIONAL problem. "A new client once asked me if my father had purchased my company for me," says five-foot-one Jill Murphy Long, president of a Newport Beach, California, advertising agency. To counteract such misconceptions, many short women develop coping strategies. Some talk louder and lower their pitch to compensate; others make sure they stand up at meetings when everyone else in the room is seated. Renee Charles, a five-foot-tall New York City architect who often squares off against six-foot-tall construction workers, says, "Projecting self-confidence is far more important than physical size."

One political powerhouse who sees her height as a boon is five-foot-tall Donna Shalala, secretary of Health and Human Services, who says, "There are enormous advantages to being short. Tall, athletic, attractive men are constantly overestimated. But if you're short, people underestimate you constantly. Which is a very good position to be in ... I think Janet Reno [who is six foot one] has a lot more problems negotiating her way through power than I do."

—Judy Artunian

memo from MMK

Should I wait for a promised raise—or quit?

TO: MARILYN MOATS KENNEDY

My career has been on hold for the past three years as my company struggles through the recession. I've been promised a raise and promotion every six to nine months. But when the time comes around, my boss says, "You'll have to be patient. We just haven't turned the corner yet." Am I a fool to wait? —Twiddling My Thumbs

TO: TMT Despite the mini upturn in the economy, a lot of people are still being told by tightfisted companies that their raises will have to wait.

You have waited long enough. You must have stayed so long for a reason: perhaps you really like the job, the skills you are getting, your boss or all three. But it's time to make a critical assessment, because five years from now, when the recession is over, people will wonder why you stayed in one position at the same salary for so long.

Before you initiate a job hunt, make your case one last time with your boss. Document your successes. (This is not a waste of time; you can add them to your résumé.) Describe exactly what you expect for all the work you've done—a new title, more responsibilities, the percent increase in salary you believe you've earned. Ask if you can expect any or all of these upgrades within three months. If your boss still says she "can't promise anything," one of two problems exists: She either doesn't have the power to give you what you want or she doesn't especially care if you leave. In either case, it's time to start looking.

Marilyn Moats Kennedy, who heads a Chicago-based consulting firm, will answer selected questions in this column. Send your questions to: Job Strategies, Glamour, 350 Madison Ave., New York NY 10017.

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NONTRADITIONAL JOBS FOR WOMEN

WHEN WOMEN think about nontraditional jobs, they usually think of construction work—carpenters, electricians, and plumbers. What women don't consider are a full range of jobs such as copy-machine repairer, water-treatment plant operator, or drafter. In fact, most jobs are nontraditional for women, since women are concentrated in only 20 out of 440 broad occupational classifications. Nontraditional jobs are considered any occupation where women are less than 25 percent of the workers.

There is a perception in American society that women have made great strides in the workplace and that they are now represented in significant numbers in all types of jobs. In fact, only a small percentage of women work in nontraditional occupations. These nontraditional jobs are primarily in professional occupations such as doctor and lawyer. Statistics for 1992 show that women were 20.4 percent of employed doctors and 21.4 percent of employed lawyers. In contrast, only 1.2 percent of electricians, 10.3 percent of telephone installers, 4.6 percent of truck drivers, and .8 percent of auto mechanics were women.

In 1992, women working as mechanics earned $523 a week, while women working as data entry clerks earned only $344. What's different about these jobs? One difference is who works in them. Women make up 88 percent of all data entry clerks, making this traditional women's work, and only 3 percent of mechanics, which is considered nontraditional.

Why is it important for women to have a chance in male-dominated occupations? The primary reason is economic self-sufficiency. Women are too often unable to support themselves and their families by working in low-paying, traditionally female jobs such as child-care worker, nursing assistant, and cashier. A salary of $523 a week goes a lot farther than $344. Nontraditional jobs typically pay 30 percent more than traditional female jobs. Most nontraditional occupations also have established career ladders and provide on-the-job training. Traditionally, female occupations often require additional education for career advancement. For example, a copy-machine repair technician can earn $17 an hour as a trainee and can advance to $22 as a field technician, but a nursing assistant interested in increasing her salary must go to college to obtain her nursing degree.

Just like men, women's interests and abilities are diverse. Some women take great pride and enjoyment in building or repairing things. Women working in nontraditional jobs often have worked in traditionally female jobs but were unhappy with the work. Working in nontraditional jobs increases their self-esteem and job satisfaction. Women in the construction trades can drive by a building with their kids and say, "Mom helped build that!" Many women also prefer working outdoors in jobs such as surveyor or phone installer, where everyone's "office" has a window. Nontraditional jobs often offer greater independence: a locksmith or a truck driver maps

out her own work day and schedule. Many nontraditional jobs are characterized by less supervision and more autonomy than traditional female jobs.

BEHIND THE STATISTICS

Seventy-three percent of women work in nonprofessional occupations. However, the number of women working in the blue-collar trades and technical occupations has remained small over the past few years. Thus, the wage gap between men and women continues to be large. As of 1994 that wage gap is about 75 cents to the dollar. Women continue to lag in blue-collar and technical jobs for a variety of reasons:

—Women's lack of familiarity with the blue-collar jobs. While many young men may have helped their fathers work on the car, most young women helped their mothers clean the house. Subsequently, many women cannot picture what an auto mechanic does and are unfamiliar with mechanical work. Few women are likely to know what a computerized machine tooler does (they operate machines programmed by computers to cut metal parts for airplanes, appliances and other products), or what an electrical-line mechanic does (they fix and maintain electric-utility cables). In contrast, if you ask women what a nurse or a secretary does, most will be able to tell you.

—Most women and girls do not know other women who have worked in these jobs and cannot imagine themselves in these roles. Role models for women and girls considering their job options are essential.

—Guidance and employment counselors may not suggest a career in welding or firefighting to their female students or clients, thinking it more appropriate for women and girls to pursue clerical courses rather than trade and protective service careers.

—Some women have found it difficult to work in nontraditional jobs because they have faced sexual harassment. A study conducted in the 1980s by Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), a national women's organization focusing on employment and training issues, found that 98 percent of tradeswomen surveyed had experienced sexual harassment.

—The lack of basic pre-vocational skills needed for a nontraditional career may deter some women from pursuing nontraditional work. They may fear math, a requirement for most technical and trade occupations. Or they may be unfamiliar with tools, or may not be used to doing the heavy lifting that some nontraditional jobs require.

—Others may not find the support they need from family and friends. Parents, in particular, may not think that nontraditional jobs are appropriate for their daughters.

STRATEGIES FOR NONTRADITIONAL WORK

There are effective strategies to help women enter nontraditional jobs by preparing both the women themselves and the workplace.

Women interested in finding out more about nontraditional occupations can peruse *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, available at local libraries.

This US Department of Labor publication describes the training needed and what the work is like for many different jobs. They can also contact the human resources department of an employer in a nontraditional field or a union apprenticeship director and ask them for referrals of women already working in nontraditional jobs in their companies or unions. A woman can also ask the employer about the possibility of doing a job shadow, where she is paired with an employee for a few hours to observe what the work is like. Perhaps she can try out the job—maybe lay some cable or climb scaffolding. Union apprenticeship directors may also be willing to facilitate job shadowing opportunities. finally, women can do some research to see if there is a support group for women in nontraditional jobs in their communities where they can learn about job opportunities and strategies for pursuing nontraditional work. A good place to start is to call the US Department of Labor, Women's Bureau for their region.

Education and job training systems can focus on recruiting women for nontraditional jobs by providing them with career information and access to female role models. They also can link women with support groups for women in the trades and technical occupations. Job-training programs can teach women how to handle sexual harassment, and help them develop their physical strength, math aptitude, and tool identification skills. Employers and unions can be prepared to integrate women into nontraditional worksites by preventing isolation and providing appropriate changing facilities and bathrooms. Employers also can take an active role in preventing sexual harassment, including sending a strong message to employees and management that sexual harassment will not be tolerated.

Successful efforts to train and place women in nontraditional jobs are occurring throughout the United States. For example, in 1991 the Nontraditional Employment for Women Act (NEW) was passed, requiring for the first time that states and local job training councils set goals for training women and girls in nontraditional jobs, and to evaluate their progress in meeting those goals.

AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES FOR NONTRADITIONAL JOBS

Telephone Installer and Repairer	$656
Tool & Die Maker	$642
Firefighter	$636
Data Processing Equipment Repairer	$619
Stationary Engineer	$618
Police Officer & Detective	$615
Aircraft Engine Mechanic	$606
Millwright	$594
Electrical & Electronic Technician	$593
Crane & Tower Operator	$570
Drafter	$527
Plumber, Pipefitter, & Steamfitter	$518
Heavy Equipment Mechanic	$516
Operating Engineer	$514
Sewage Treatment Plant Operator	$503

These are the average weekly wages for both women and men prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) from 1992 data. The BLS is unable to obtain data on women's wages in many nontraditional jobs simply because there are so few women who work in them.

Anticipating the passage of this legislation, Wider Opportunities for Women launched the Nontraditional Employment Training (NET) project to help increase women's access to nontraditional training and well-paid jobs through the mainstream job training system. The NET Project assists a local leadership team composed of job training and vocational education administrators, employers, unions, apprenticeship officials, state legislators, tradeswomen, and others. All these groups work together to make the changes in the job-training system necessary to train women for nontraditional jobs.

After two years, the accomplishments of the project have been significant. In the project's Montana demonstration site, 60 women have been trained for nontraditional jobs at an average hourly wage of $9.51. The jobs included heavy-equipment operator, soil tester, and truck driver. In Milwaukee, over 88 women have chosen a nontraditional occupation as a career goal, and many have already been placed in nontraditional jobs such as computerized-machine tooler, welder, and construction-crew supervisor, with these jobs paying an average wage of $8.69 an hour.

These efforts show that women are interested in working at male-dominated jobs and are willing to deal with the negatives such as sexual harassment in order to earn higher wages and enjoy expanded career opportunities. If women continue to be concentrated in low-paying, traditionally female jobs, they will never truly be able to support themselves and their families. For many, a nontraditional job can mean the difference between poverty and economic self-sufficiency.

Kristin Watkins is the program associate for the Nontraditional Employment Training (NET) Project of Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) in Washington, DC. She also provides key support for WOW's public policy work in nontraditional employment for women.

RESOURCES

The following materials on nontraditional occupations for women are available at Wider Opportunities for Women, 1325 G Street NW, Washington, DC, 20005. (202-638-3143).

Nontraditional Occupations for Women. A bibliography published by WOW lists the best materials available on the subject, including videos, newsletters, and reports.

Women and Nontraditional Work Factsheet. Published by WOW; gives a statistical profile of women employed in nontraditional occupations, outlines public policy relating to nontraditional occupations, and provides an overview of the barriers and strategies to improve women's employment in these fields.

Consider a Nontraditional Job is an upbeat video produced by WOW targeted toward women living in rural areas. Viewers learn what the work is like, what type of work environment can be expected, and the benefits and barriers of pursuing a nontraditional job.

Mythbusters. A video for young women considering high-paying nontraditional careers. Hosted by three female teenagers of color, the video leads viewers through a series of myths about nontraditional work for women and explains why the myths are not valid. This video is available through Middlesex County Vo-Tech, 618 New Brunswick Avenue, Perth Amboy, NJ 08861. (908-442-9595).

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KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESSFULLY TRAINING YOUNG WOMEN FOR NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS (NTOs)

Recruitment

Since most women and girls are unfamiliar with nontraditional jobs, training programs in male-dominated occupations will have to educate women about nontraditional jobs as part of the recruitment process. Recruitment materials should emphasize information about the types of jobs that nontraditional training will result in and the salary range for entry level and experienced workers. All brochures, flyers and radio and TV announcements should feature photos and testimonials of women doing nontraditional occupations. Because not all nontraditional jobs are for all young women, programs should recruit more women than they plan to train.

Nonbiased Assessment/Career Exploration

Many standard assessment tools evaluate interests and aptitudes that are based on past experience. As a result, they tend to screen women and girls out of nontraditional jobs. Because no assessment tool has been developed that does not screen women and girls out of nontraditional jobs, assessment should include interviews that draw out skills and interests young women may have that are transferrable to nontraditional employment. Because young women are likely to express interest in only those jobs with which they are familiar, assessment should follow career exploration activities, including the provision of career information, access to role models in nontraditional careers, and visits to worksites.

Prevocational Training

In-sufficient pre-vocational training leaves many young women unprepared to keep pace with occupational skills training or entry-level employment in nontraditional occupations. They may fear math -- a requirement for most technical and trade jobs; they may be unfamiliar with tools; and they may not be used to doing the heavy lifting that some nontraditional jobs require. To ensure young women's success in nontraditional training and employment, training programs in male-dominated occupations should include occupationally specific math skills, pre-vocational training and physical conditioning.

Survival Skills

Young women interested in nontraditional occupations must be prepared for the sexual harassment and isolation they are likely to face during training and in the workplace. "Survival skills" training for nontraditional occupations should include instruction in women's legal rights on the job and techniques to prevent and diffuse sexual harassment. Young women in nontraditional training should also have access to an ongoing support group for women employed in and training for nontraditional jobs.

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Preparing Employers and Unions

Training programs in male-dominated occupations should prepare employers and unions to successfully receive young women in nontraditional occupations in the workplace. Activities to prepare employers and unions include workshops on how to prevent the isolation of women on the jobsite, the provision of changing facilities and equipment for women, and sexual harassment prevention, including sending a strong top-down message to all employees that sexual harassment will not be tolerated.

Training for Vocational Counselors and Instructors

Like many young women themselves, some counselors and instructors may not know any women in nontraditional jobs and may not think that women can do nontraditional jobs or are interested in them. In-service training for vocational counselors and instructors should include information about nontraditional jobs for women, instruction on how to present nontraditional career options to young women, and role model panels.

Workshops for Parents

Girls may not find support from parents for working in a nontraditional occupation. Workshops that acquaint parents with the types of training and jobs that their daughters can be in and addresses parents' fears and concerns can be the catalyst for parents supporting daughters who want to make nontraditional career choices.

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SUCCESSFULLY RECRUITING YOUNG WOMEN FOR NONTRADITIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

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Most women and girls are unfamiliar with nontraditional jobs and have never considered working in a nontraditional career. Thus, training programs in male-dominated occupations must actively recruit female students and trainees. There are three key elements for successfully recruiting young women for nontraditional training programs:

- **Provide Career Information**

  As part of the recruitment process, you will have to educate young women about nontraditional jobs. Those programs that have been most successful use recruitment materials that emphasize information about the types of jobs that nontraditional training will result in and the salary range for entry-level workers and experienced workers. The most effective recruitment tools are brochures, flyers, radio and television public service announcements, and newspaper and TV coverage.

- **Feature Role Models**

  Since most women and girls do not know any women who work in nontraditional jobs, recruitment materials must convey the message that women can do this kind of work. This is done most effectively by featuring photos and testimonials of women doing nontraditional jobs and employing them in all publicity and recruitment activities. Role models should reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of your community or target group.

- **Recruit More Young Women Than You Will Train**

  Nontraditional jobs are not for all young women. A significant number will decide they do not want to work in a male-dominated occupation when they learn about the nature of the work and the barriers women face. Thus, it is essential that training programs provide an in-depth orientation to young women before they are enrolled in the program. In addition, some applicants to nontraditional training programs will not meet program requirements. Other young women may select themselves out of training because of an economic or family crisis. The most successful programs recognize that in order to meet their goals for training young women for nontraditional careers, they must recruit more young women than they plan to train.

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-19-

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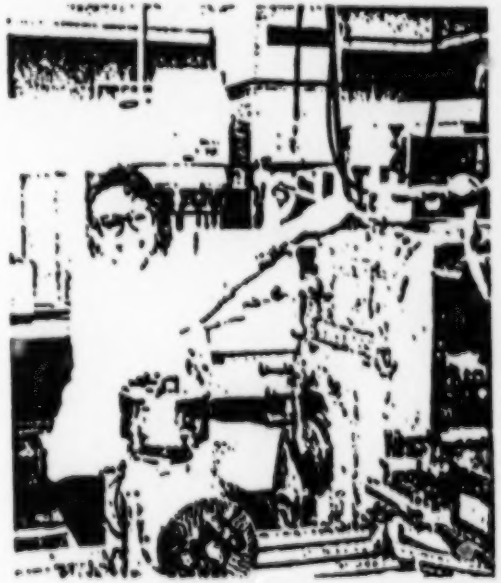

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Wider Opportunities for Women

WORKING WITH ROLE MODELS IN NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS (NTOs)

NTO role models are women who have successfully entered a nontraditional occupation. Their inclusion in nontraditional training programs is essential for two reasons. First, most women and girls do not know women who work in nontraditional jobs and have been socialized to think that women cannot do this kind of work. However, as they see and talk to women working in nontraditional jobs, they can begin to envision themselves doing so also. Secondly, as experienced women in nontraditional occupations, role models can also give advice and support to young women thinking about or just beginning a nontraditional career. For example, they can share their strategies for handling uncooperative co-workers, dealing with unsupportive family members, and finding child care.

To locate role models, do some research to see if there is a tradeswomen's support group in your area. Check with local women's organizations or contact the National Tradeswomen's Network (215-551-3319). Call employers in the NTO program's targeted occupational areas to see if they employ any women working in nontraditional occupations. Similarly, trade unions are also sources of role models; ask for the names of women who are union members or are in their apprenticeship programs. Because young women can most easily identify with role models who are similar to themselves, it is most effective to use role models who resemble the training participants in age, race/ethnicity, and socio-economic background, and who are in the same occupational area as the training program. This is not always possible, so do your best initially. Eventually your program graduates will be able to come back as role models.

Once located, role models can be asked to participate in the following NTO program activities:

- **Publicity and Recruitment.** Role models should be featured on program brochures, flyers, videos and ads, and in newspaper, television and radio stories about women working in nontraditional careers.

- **Career Exploration.** Role models should be included as speakers and members of panel interviews in nontraditional training program orientations and career exploration classes.

- **Support.** Role models can be paired with young women as mentors and attend support groups for young women in nontraditional training.

- **Job Preparation.** Role models can act as the employer in mock interviews with training participants and give feedback to trainees on their interviewing skills. They can also teach survival skills classes on how to deal with sexual harassment and isolation in the workplace.

- **NTO Presentations and Trainings.** Role models can be included as speakers and members of panel interviews in presentations to counselors, instructors, employers, parents, funders, advisory committees, community organizations, and state and local education and job training administrative personnel.

Role models should be reimbursed for their expenses and for lost wages if they have to take leave from their jobs. Role models who are used more than once or twice should be paid for their time.

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Wider Opportunities for Women

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING NTO ROLE MODEL PANELS

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Potential role models should be prescreened by the moderator; ask these questions over the phone before you decide to include a woman in a role model panel. Her answers should convey that she can do her job, that she likes it, and that she has managed to cope with the isolation and harassment. Do not use a woman who puts out strong negative messages about her job; she will turn others off. Never use a role model who has not been prescreened.

Role model panels should be informal and conversational. Panelists should be themselves, and try to give answers that are brief, but specific. Be sure to give each panelist a copy of the panel agenda and the questions you would like them to address in advance. The questions that follow are reprinted on the next page for easy replication.

To begin the presentation, have each panelist talk for 5 to 7 minutes on her background and experiences in a nontraditional occupation (NTO), for example:

- What work did you do before entering your current nontraditional job?
- How did you find out about your nontraditional job?
- Why did you decide to enter a nontraditional job?
- What do you do during a typical day of work?
- What barriers have you faced and how have you overcome them?
- What are your salary, benefits, and career opportunities?
- Describe any isolation or harassment you have experienced on the job and how you have handled/coped with it.
- If this is the case, when did you gain respect on your job from your supervisor and coworkers?
- Do you think having a support group, mentors, and/or 'survival skills' training would have made entering and working in a nontraditional occupation easier for you?

The moderator should try to make clear to the audience that providing 'survival skills' training for women interested in entering an NTO will improve their success. 'Survival skills' training includes how to deal with sexual harassment, how to know if you are being discriminated against in job assignments, access to role models, employers' and unions' expectations of apprentices, and how to enable your family and friends to support your nontraditional career efforts.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR NTO ROLE MODEL PANELS

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Role model panels are informal and conversational. Be yourself, and try to give answers that are brief, but specific.

To begin the presentation, please talk for 5 to 7 minutes on your background and experiences in a nontraditional occupation (NTO), for example:

- What work did you do before entering your current nontraditional job?
- How did you find out about your nontraditional job?
- Why did you decide to enter a nontraditional job?
- What do you do during a typical day of work?
- What barriers have you faced and how have you overcome them?
- What are your salary, benefits, and career opportunities?
- Describe any isolation or harassment you have experienced on the job and how you have handled/coped with it.
- If this is the case, when did you gain respect on your job from your supervisor and coworkers?
- Do you think having a support group, mentors, and/or "survival skills" training would have made entering and working in a nontraditional occupation easier for you?

The moderator will try to make clear to the audience that providing "survival skills" training for women interested in entering an NTO will improve their success. "Survival skills" training includes how to deal with sexual harassment, how to know if you are being discriminated against in job assignments, access to role models, employers' and unions' expectations of apprentices, and how to enable your family and friends to support your nontraditional career efforts.

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Wider Opportunities for Women

HOW ASSESSMENT TOOLS AFFECT THE CAREER GUIDANCE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

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Most vocational education and job training programs use standardized tools to assess participants' abilities and interests, in order to help them find the occupations for which they are best suited. However, as a result of sex role conditioning in society and sex bias within the tools themselves, many of these tools tend to steer women and girls into a small number of traditionally female occupations. The Commission on Sex Bias in Measurement of the Association for Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance defined sex-bias as "that condition or provision which influences a person to limit his or her consideration of career opportunities solely on the basis of that person's sex." In order for job training and vocational education programs to increase the number of women and girls trained and placed in nontraditional occupations (NTOs), career counselors need to be aware of the ways in which commonly used assessment tools steer women and girls away from NTOs.

VOCATIONAL APTITUDE TESTS

Purpose: Vocational aptitude tests are used to test an individual's capacity to be trained in a variety of areas. Generally, they take the form of test batteries -- groups of several tests, each of which is designed to test a specific aptitude. The individual's performance on the various tests is compared, and the tests on which the individual's performance is strongest are considered indicative of where her strongest aptitude, or capacity to be trained, lies.

Problem: Typical male and female test-takers perform differently on particular aptitude tests. Males generally demonstrate higher aptitude on tests of mathematical and spatial ability, while females tend to demonstrate higher aptitude in reading comprehension, clerical ability, and spelling. These gender differences in tested aptitude lead to differentiated career guidance; men and boys are counseled to enter jobs requiring strong spatial and math skills, such as trade and technical occupations, while women and girls are encouraged to enter clerical occupations.

Examples: ***Differential Aptitude Test (DAT), General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB), Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)***

What to keep in mind when using aptitude tests for women and girls' career guidance:

- While the general range of scores on a test battery tends to correlate with success in the classroom, differences in performance among specific tests in a battery may be poor indicators of where individuals' strengths and weaknesses really lie. For example, a high Mechanical Reasoning score on the DAT is not indicative of how a high school student will perform in an auto shop course, and

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a high Clerical Speed and Accuracy score is not indicative of how a high school student will perform in a typing course.

- Aptitude test scores are influenced by experience. Most of the gender disparity in math and spatial aptitude has been correlated with women and girls not taking as many math classes in high school and not participating in as many sports and other spatially oriented activities as men and boys. Some aptitude tests, such as the "Auto and Shop Information" portion of the ASVAB, are entirely dependent on experience because they test knowledge, not aptitude. Many women and girls who demonstrate a lack of "aptitude" in these areas may simply need help catching up.
- The language and content of test items can work to decrease women and girls' scores. This bias can take many forms, including the underrepresentation of female characters in word problems and reading comprehension passages; the "gender-neutral" usage of the pronoun "he;" examples that rely on "male-oriented" activities, such as sports; and content that is unfamiliar to women and girls, such as the "tool-matching" test in the GATB (which depicts objects resembling things found in workshops, with which many women and girls lack experience).

Methods used to minimize sex bias:

- Most test batteries, but not all, have eliminated the "gender-neutral" usage of masculine pronouns. Most have also increased the representation of females and the range of activities in which they are depicted.
- Some tests have included examples involving activities with which women and girls are more familiar, such as sewing machine repair and sewing patterns, to test the same constructs, or ways of thinking, as examples involving carburetor repair and blueprints.
- Vocational aptitude test scores are commonly reported with reference to "same-sex," as well as "opposite-sex" norms, in addition to general percentiles. Test-takers can find out how their scores compare to males at large and to females at large. While this technique may be an easy way to deal with internal test bias, depending on the interpretation of the results it can overstate the abilities of some females by comparing them only to the overall performance of other women and girls, or understate the abilities of some by implying that their score only seems good in comparison to other women and girls.

INTEREST ASSESSMENT

Purpose: Interest assessment tools are used to help an individual decide which occupation he or she would find most rewarding. The method of interest assessment used by most interest inventories is to identify from a list of activities those the individual finds interesting and, based on those activities, locate areas of occupational interest.

Problem: Females and males answer nearly every question on almost every inventory in a significantly disparate way. The most persistent general pattern is a female preference for activities involving people over those involving things, while males show no general preference either way. The result of these different response patterns is that men and boys are counseled to enter a broad range of occupations, relating to both people and things, while women and girls are encouraged to enter people-oriented, or "social" occupations, such as receptionist, nurse's assistant, or child care worker.

Examples: ***Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory*** **(*SCII*),** ***Kuder Occupational Interest Survey*** **(*KOIS*),** ***Non-Sexist Vocational Card Search*** **(*VCS*),** ***Unisex Edition of the ACT Interest Inventory*** **(*UNIACT*),** ***Holland Self-Directed Search*** **(*SDS*)**

What to keep in mind when using interest assessment tools for women and girls' career guidance:

- On average, even women and men in the same occupations have significantly disparate response patterns on most interest inventories, largely reflecting women and girls' preference for "people-oriented" activities. An interest inventory that is developed without consideration of divergent male and female interests within occupations will inevitably result in differentiated career guidance; women and girls will tend to be steered

away from NTOs for responding to items in a gender-typical way -- even if their responses were typical of *women* in those NTOs -- because men make up the majority of the workforce in those occupations.

- As with aptitude tests, certain types of language and content can be unfamiliar to women and girls or can make them feel uncomfortable. Even items that seem unbiased can reinforce many women and girls' belief that only men and boys can do certain jobs, if they use "male-oriented" examples to describe traditionally male occupations.
- Although easy to use and score, the interest inventory format, usually a list of activities to which the individual is asked to give a quick, gut reaction, can make women and girls' preference for typical female activities more pronounced.

Methods used to minimize sex bias:

- Sex-balancing is a method that restricts the range of inventory items to those on which women and men in the same occupations respond similarly. However, such items are few and often the small remaining differences between male and female responses on given questions can add up to sizable differences in results. UNIACT is sex-balanced.
- Sex-norming, or "same-sex norming" of interest inventories involves scoring females and males separately and comparing their interests only to those of people of their own sex in a given occupation. Although this method is considered controversial because it treats males and females *separately* in an attempt to engender *equality*, sex-norming is used by the SCII, the KOIS, and most other inventories. However, when very few women or men are already in a given occupation, inventory developers may simply find it too difficult to develop norms for that sex, such that women and girls cannot be scored for certain NTOs. This is especially the case on the KOIS.
- The "occupational daydreaming" portion of the SDS draws on an individual's creativity to escape the constraints that may prevent a male or a female from responding to an inventory in a way that is unusual for someone of his or her sex. Other methods, such as the VCS, require the individual to give lengthy consideration to every item and characterize his or her reasons for responding to each card in a certain way -- which can prompt the undecided individual to seriously consider a broader range of occupations.
- Almost all modern interest inventories describe activities rather than listing names of occupations. For example, describing the activity "making things out of wood" elicits a more positive response from women and girls than merely stating the job title "carpenter."

Over the past several years, all of the well-established tests have eliminated most gendered word usage, although the "male-oriented" content of test items can still be a barrier. Among widely used and tested aptitude test batteries, the DAT has probably done the most to minimize sex bias within the test structure, although the potential to misinterpret or overstate the differential significance of various scores remains problematic. The GATB, which contains the "tool-matching" test, and the ASVAB, which contains the "Auto and Shop Information" test, continue to create barriers for women and tend to screen females out of NTOs. For interest assessment, the current, sex-normed version of the SCII can be used to score women and girls for all but one NTO, and the VCS and SDS provide the greatest flexibility (among commonly used tools) for nontraditional interest expression. However, no ideal assessment test has been devised. Without such a test, successfully assessing women's aptitude for and interest in NTOs requires interpretation of women's standardized assessment test scores that recognizes their potential to steer women and girls into traditional occupations, in conjunction with assessment interviews and alternative assessment tools, such as the self-screening questionnaire developed by the STEP-UP Program in Vermont, which draw out skills and interests women and girls may have that are transferrable to nontraditional employment.

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Wider Opportunities for Women

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS: PRESENTING NONTRADITIONAL CAREER OPTIONS TO YOUNG WOMEN

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Not all young women will be interested in nontraditional occupations, but all young women should be presented with all the career options available to them, including nontraditional employment.

Most women and girls do not know about traderswork, technical occupations, or the apprenticeship system and have no paid work experience in these areas. Only in a few instances will a young woman sit down with a career counselor and say, "I want to be a carpenter." However, while the majority of young women have never thought about doing nontraditional work and do not have paid work experience in a nontraditional job, one-third probably have skills or interests that are transferrable to nontraditional work. When assessing young women's aptitude for and interest in nontraditional occupations, you can draw out some of these transferrable skills by asking the following questions:

- What are your hobbies and interests? Do you enjoy building or repairing things? If so, follow up with detailed questions about what she has done and help her to see how her experience transfers into skills for specific entry-level jobs.
- Do you do any work around the house like painting? If so, do you enjoy it? Let me tell you about painting as a career (describe wage, career ladder, entry-level requirements, and training available).
- Have you ever fixed something that was broken, for example, a toilet, a toaster oven, or a sewing machine? If so, how did you feel after you fixed it? Describe mechanical and electro-mechanical careers.
- Do you work in your garden, or have you lived on a farm or a ranch? If so, describe what kinds of things you have done. Describe landscaping jobs, laborer positions, etc.
- Do you have a driver's license? Have you ever driven a tractor, a truck, or a trailer? Can you drive a standard shift automobile? Describe careers in the transportation industry, such as trucking, delivery, and bus driving.
- Have you ever worked on your car? Changed a tire or the oil? Replaced the spark plugs? Describe jobs such as auto mechanic and auto body worker and training opportunities in these fields.

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- Have you ever used hand tools? What about power tools? Have you ever used a vacuum? If so, then you have used a power tool.

- Do you sew at all? If so, did you know that following a sewing pattern requires the same skills as reading a blueprint for building a house or a schematic drawing for repairing a copy machine?

It is important to ask very specific questions. Frequently, when women are asked if they've ever fixed anything that was broken, they say no. But when prompted with specific examples, such as "What happens when the faucet in your apartment leaks or the plaster cracks?," women will say, yes, in fact they did fix this or that. The student will feel empowered when she realizes that some of the little things she has done around the house could translate into a potential career.

When presenting nontraditional job options to young women, make the following key points:

- Describe potential jobs in detail, indicating the entry-level wage and career advancement opportunities, and describe the training necessary to obtain these jobs, the length of training, the cost if any, supportive services available, and entry-level training requirements.

- Explain the apprenticeship system. Most Americans, but women in particular, are unfamiliar with this method of training.

- Offer to put the student in touch with role models working in nontraditional jobs who can give her more detailed information about different kinds of work.

- Discuss both the benefits and barriers for women working in nontraditional jobs. Let the student decide what is best for her.

- Assist the student in overcoming her math fears, if necessary. Many young women lack confidence in their math ability, even when their skills are good. If the student does need help catching up, let her know that tutoring is available.

- Mention the possibility of joining a support group for women who are in nontraditional training and jobs. If the student is interested in pursuing nontraditional work, but is afraid her family and friends will not support her decision, let her know that other support systems are available.

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NONTRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND EDUCATION RESOURCES NATIONALLY AND IN YOUR STATE

For Assistance in Identifying Nontraditional Training Programs and Resources in Your Area Contact:

- U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau (202-219-6611) or your Women's Bureau Regional Administrator for the Women's Bureau Directory of Nontraditional Training and Employment Programs Serving Women
- Wider Opportunities for Women (202-638-3143) for WOW's Workforce Network Directory
- State Sex Equity Coordinator

For Assistance in Identifying Local Tradeswomen Contact:

- Local Tradeswomen's Support Group
- Local Women's Organizations
- National Tradeswomen's Network (215-551-3319)
- Local Employers and Unions in Occupational Areas that are Nontraditional for Women

For Additional Information on Nontraditional Employment and Training in Your Community Contact:

- Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (Regional, State, and Area Offices)
- Employment and Training Administration (Regional and State Offices)
- Department of Transportation (Regional and State Civil Rights Divisions)
- Department of Housing (State and Local HOME Program Offices)
- Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (Regional, District, and Area Offices)
- State Contact for Job Training Partnership Act 8 Percent Education Coordination Monies (Nontraditional employment for women and school-to-work transition are two of three priority areas for these funds.)
- Local Private Industry Councils

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National Tradeswomen Resources

TRADESWOMEN, INC.
P.O. Box 2622
Berkeley, CA 94710
510/649-6160

WOMEN EMPOWERING WOMEN
P.O. Box 6506
Albany, CA 94706
510/649-6265

CENTURY FREEWAY WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
2610 Industry Way, Suite B
Lynwood, CA 90262
213/639-9181

WOMEN IN SKILLED TRADES
362 22nd Street
Oakland, CA 94612
510/891-9393

OPERATING ENGINEERS WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP
335 Haddon Road
Oakland, CA 94606
Contact Beth at 510-835-2511, Carla at 510-636-1134 or Lisa at 510/769-0340

WOMEN AT WORK
78 Marengo Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91101
818/796-6870

SACRAMENTO TRADESWOMEN
1531 36th Street
Sacramento, CA 95816
Donna Lopez, 916/456-5555

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RHODE ISLAND TRADESWOMEN NETWORK
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WOMEN IN NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS (WINTO)
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New Haven, CT 06511
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FLORIDA TRADESWOMEN NETWORK
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305/764-1128

CHICAGO WOMEN IN THE TRADES
37 South Ashland Avenue
Chicago, IL 60607
312/942-1444

WOMEN CAN/WOMEN CAN II
828 South Wabash, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60605
312/922-8530

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Kathy Walsh, 816/831-2719

WOMEN WORKING TECHNICAL
Bergen County Technical School
280 Hackensack Ave.
Hackensack, NJ 07601
201/343-6000, ext. 270

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212/227-2981

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WOMEN IN TRADES FAIR
700 Third Ave., Suite 940
Seattle, WA 98104
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MILWAUKEE WOMEN IN THE TRADES
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WOMEN & EMPLOYMENT, INC.
601 Delaware Avenue
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WOW
ANNIVERSARY

Wider Opportunities for Women

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THE NONTRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT TRAINING (NET) PROJECT

Wider Opportunities for Women created the Nontraditional Employment Training (NET) Project in 1990 to improve access to nontraditional training and well-paid jobs for women through Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs across the United States. Supported by the Ford Foundation, the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, the Irvine Foundation, and the Levi-Strauss Foundation, the project has developed institutional strategies that can be implemented by JTPA administrators and program providers to:

- **assess the barriers** to nontraditional training in their communities;
- **develop community teams to overcome the barriers** in administrative systems, contract management, recruitment, assessment, supportive services, occupational skills training, job development and retention;
- **set goals** for training, placing, and retaining women in nontraditional jobs;
- **integrate women into pre-existing training programs and on-the-job training slots** that are in male-dominated occupations;
- **revamp contracting procedures** to give priority to proposals with nontraditional occupational training components;
- **train staff and service providers** to support the transition of women into nontraditional programs;
- **develop training packages** to be used by all parts of the local training systems;
- **provide technical assistance to employers and unions** to prepare them to work successfully with women; and
- **promote coordination and collaboration** with vocational education, the apprenticeship and training system, the state sex equity office, and the JOBS program.

Currently, only 9 percent of women served in JTPA programs are trained and placed in nontraditional occupations. In 1991, the Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW) Act was passed, requiring all states and JTPA service deliverers to plan for and increase access to nontraditional training and jobs for women served through JTPA.

The NET site demonstration projects link WOW, the Private Industry Council, and a local women's employment and training organization to lead the project in each site. Support is provided by a local leadership team, composed of JTPA staff and board members, employers, unions, vocational education administrators, state legislators, apprenticeship and training officials, JTPA service providers, community-based women's organizations, the sex equity coordinator, and tradeswomen. The original NET sites are located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; the state of Montana; and Hartford, Connecticut. Current sites are located in Sacramento, California; Tulare County, California; and Washington, DC.

To support its technical assistance effort, WOW works with the National Tradeswomen's Network and Workforce Policy Associates, nationally known employment and training experts. In addition, the NET Project provides technical assistance, trainings and briefings on nontraditional training and related legislation to the U.S. Department of Labor, Congress, State Departments of Labor and State Job Training Coordinating Councils, national employment and training associations, Private Industry Councils, community-based organizations, employers and unions. The NET Project was cited as a model for the NEW Act in a US DOL Guidance Letter, which included a two-page attachment on the NET Project.

For additional information on the NET Project, contact Kristin Watkins at (202) 638-3143.

May 1994

815 15th Street, NW ■ Suite 916 ■ Washington, DC 20005 ■ (202) 638-3143 ■ Fax (202) 638-4885

Wider Opportunities for Women

About WOW

Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) works nationally and in its home community of Washington, D.C. to achieve economic independence and equality of opportunity for women and girls. For nearly 30 years, WOW has helped women learn to earn, with programs emphasizing literacy, technical and nontraditional skills, and career development. Since 1964, WOW has trained more than 10,000 women for well-paid work.

What began as a local Washington effort to help women help themselves has become a multi-faceted women's employment organization, recognized nationally for its skills training models, technical assistance, and advocacy for women workers. While it continues to provide training services locally, WOW also leads the Women's Work Force Network (WWFN) comprised of over 500 independent women's employment programs and advocates in every state and the District of Columbia. Each year, the Network reaches more than 300,000 women seeking employment information, counseling, training and jobs. With its unique perspective as a job trainer and policy monitor, WOW is a respected advocate for the needs and rights of women workers.

1994 Activities

The WOMANLINC Project: staff development workshops and technical assistance for organizations interested in teaching literacy in the context of employment or intergenerational programs;
Leadership Development Project: state-based institutes and follow-up support designed to increase the effectiveness of women's advocates in community-based employment and training organizations;
Nontraditional Employment Training Project: technical assistance for the JTPA system on improving the access of women to nontraditional occupations;
Educational Equity Options Project (EEOP): consultation with school systems to improve vocational education opportunities for women and girls;
The Women at Work Awards: a recognition event to celebrate exceptional contributions to working women in the media, public policy, in the workplace, and in individual leadership;
The Sexual Harassment Solutions Project: a best practices project identifying programs and policies that prevent or address sexual harassment in the workplace;
The Family Literacy Project: a program for local area women integrating basic skills, introduction to nontraditional and technical jobs, and family learning activities;
The DC NEW Act Project: a local public education and technical assistance project to increase the numbers of low income women entering and succeeding in training for nontraditional jobs.

Leadership

WOW is governed by a Board of Directors and guided by advice from the National Commission on Working Women, the Regional Leaders of WOW's Women's Work Force Network, and a local Industry Advisory Council. WOW's Board Chair is Anna Padia; Chair of the Commission, Irene Natividad; and Executive Director is Cynthia Marano.

Cynthia Marano, *Executive Director*

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